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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA: SHREWD AND MERCURIAL GOVERNOR FAVORS KRG,
ALIENATES SUNNIS

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Alex Laskaris for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Ninewa provincial governor Kashmoula is a pro-KRG Sunni Arab whose administration has contributed to the socio-economic decline of the province. Elected with US support by Kurdish and pro-Kurdish members of the Provincial Council following the 2004 assassination of his cousin, the former Governor, Kashmoula comes from a prominent Moslawi (i.e. native to Mosul) family. He professes a devout Sunni faith, as well as respect for Christianity and Judaism; he is contemptuous of the Shia, deeply anti-clerical, and dismissive of tribal authorities. He maintains an active enemies list; prominent entries that we have heard him savage include the head of the Ninewa Operations Command (NOC), the Mayor of Mosul, the Ministers of Communications and Planning, the leadership of the IIP and Al-Hudba parties, and tribal sheikhs. He is highly critical in private of US actions since the overthrow of the regime but has engaged US military and civilian interlocutors since 2004. He is prone to public histrionics. Indicators suggest that he is corrupt, and we have found him unresponsive to the needs of his citizens, a policy that likely feeds Sunni alienation, though it supports the larger political goals of his Kurdish patrons. He has a broad knowledge of the Koran which even his detractors acknowledge, understands the workings of the Iraqi government better than most of his peers, and is one of the reasons Ninewa so desperately needs provincial elections. End summary.

¶2. (S/NF) PRT leader has averaged two meetings a week with Ninewa Governor Duraid Muhammed Kashmoula since late June; these have ranged from one-on-one conversations to large public sessions. We have found him accessible but generally unresponsive to key issues of governance. He has an elemental view of power (in his view it can never be shared) and little aptitude for governance, but displays a tactical cunning born of survival in a deadly zero-sum world. He is capable of rational discourse, but is prone to histrionics and belittling his interlocutors in public. The exception to this is Americans; he has never to our knowledge publicly criticized coalition forces, the PRT or the USG. In private, including with us, he has been critical of all three. His main complaints against the USG are our mistakes since 2003, support for the governing structure in Baghdad, "misguided" advocacy of the separation of powers, and sponsorship of the Sons of Iraq program. He has flatly described the SOI as a "serious, deadly mistake that will come back to haunt the U.S." and says that coalition forces created the problem and have the responsibility to fix it.

¶3. (S/NF) Kashmoula entered the Iraqi army academy in 1965, graduating in 1967. He told us he reached the rank of LTC in 1982 but was forced to retire when he refused to join the Ba'ath party. He lost family members in 1959, when his father protected Kurds during violence in Mosul, and

a brother who was executed during the Saddam Hussein regime. Following retirement from the army he worked as a businessman importing goods from Turkey; after the first Gulf War, he worked briefly as a taxi driver. In a meeting on September 8, he told us that 16 of his close associates, mainly his security detail, were murdered since he became Governor. The latest was a young former police man who served tea in his office, killed by terrorists this month.

¶4. He has also lost the following family members:

- Laith Kshmoura (son), murdered September 7, 2004
- Walid Kashmoura (cousin), murdered February 20, 2005
- Ali Kashmoura (nephew), murdered February 23, 2005
- Older brother (name unknown), murdered September 2005

¶5. (S/NF) On the eve of Ramadan, Kashmoura inveighed against the hypocrisy of his fellow Moslawis and trumpeted the virtue of his family, particularly his son studying in the US at Drexel University who is actively resisting the temptations of the flesh, as well as his seven year-old daughter, who is observing the Ramadan fast for the third time. Unlike his own family, he claims, other Iraqis drink, gamble, visit prostitutes and steal from each other. Sunni clerics, he believes, are mostly corrupt, venal men; the rest are fanatics who preach violence. When we asked him if he thought Iraq had any moral leadership, he responded immediately "Sistani"...but then added that the Shia are a crazy cult that worships its leaders. Other than Shia, Kashmoura professes deep respect for the faiths represented in Ninewa to the extent that he showed us a 1939 photo of his grandfather standing next to the chief rabbi of Mosul. He

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says he admires the Christian community for its ability to care for its own; he routinely asks PRT leader if he has ever seen a poor Christian or a poor Christian neighborhood. (Comment: Yes and yes, but we treat it as a rhetorical question. End Comment.)

¶5. (S/NF) What Kashmoura really admires is the Kurdish Regional Government, and Keshro Goran, his Kurdish Vice Governor, is one of only two high-ranking official we have ever heard him praise. Surprisingly, the other is Minister of Finance Bayan Jabir, who he praised as a "good, hard-working man" despite Kashmoura,s repeated rants against the central government,s failure to deliver Ninewa,s budget in any sort of reasonable fashion. He acknowledges that many people believe that Goran is the "power behind the throne" in Ninewa, but maintains that Goran is a loyal deputy who answers exclusively to him. (Comment: We think that is false; Goran is a KDP stalwart who has made it clear to us that he answers to his party and the KRG. End Comment.) His main critique of his fellow Sunni Arabs is that they should have made common cause with their fellow Sunnis, the Kurds. Kashmoura keeps his family in Dahuk during the school year and confined to his heavily protected Mosul residence in the summer.

¶6. (S/NF) Kashmoura has seized upon the issue of security as the primary reason for his continued inability to deliver essential services to the citizenry, though at times he does point a critical finger at the central government,s failure to provide resources to the provincial government. Security is also the means by which he scores points against one of his nemeses, Ninewa Operations Command (NOC) commander LTG Riyadh. Kashmoura is careful to separate out coalition forces, who he praises consistently, from the Iraqi army and police, who he routinely paints as incompetent, corrupt human rights abusers riddled with terrorists and their sympathizers. We believe that the source of Kashmoura,s animus is his belief that all power in the province, including military and police, should be centralized in his office, as was the case in Saddam,s time. Kashmoura has told us that, as much as he despised Saddam, this was the only way for a governor to be able to function. He politely

deflects our views on the decentralization of power, saying that they are wonderful for Americans, but "this is Iraq." We perceive a personal dislike for Riyadh, but the conflict centers around overlapping mandates. Criticizing the security situation in public and in Baghdad pays off in two ways for Kashmoula: he weakens Riyadh while reducing expectations on his own administration. Kashmoula routinely rails, both in private and publicly, against the failure of the central government to provide Ninewa,s budget in any sort of timely fashion. He uses this failure as another excuse for his failure to provide adequate services to Ninewa,s population.

¶17. (S/NF) Kashmoula freely identifies people and organizations as his foes, but likes to add "I do not hate my enemies." He is critical) to us) of our ongoing dialogue with Iraqi Islamic Party leader Muhammed Shakr and Al-Hudba leader Athiel El-Nejefi. He says that we are "talking to terrorists who hate you but want to keep you in Iraqi long enough for you to hand them power." He has a longstanding feud with IIP Minister of Communications Farouk Abdel-Qadr, which culminated in 2004 when Abdel-Qadr walked out of the Provincial Council when Kashmoula won the governorship. The fact that Abdel-Qadr) also a Sunni Moslawi) has returned as the PM,s envoy for Mosul reconstruction infuriates Kashmoula to the extent that we have little expectation that the two will be able to cooperate for the good of the province. Kashmoula resents Mayor Zuhair al-Araji of Mosul, probably because Zuhair leverages his good relations with the USG into support for his delivering basic services independently of his nominal boss ... the governor. The conflict probably is not personal, but it is another sign of Kashmoula,s inability to countenance anyone in the province whose power does not derive from his own.

¶18. (S/NF) Kashmoula is contemptuous of the tribal leaders, referring to them always as the "so called-sheikhs." He routinely berates them in public meetings and claims that none of them could muster more than 10 followers. The institution of sheikhdom died before Saddam, he claims, and the current crop are nothing more than "old men in traditional dress who Saddam created." Kashmoula reserves special (and unexplained) animus for Sheikh Abdullah al-Yawar of the Shammar tribe, but has not offered an explanation yet, and also dislikes the Minister of Planning. At the United and Prosperous conference that MND-N hosted in Erbil in August, Kashmoula seized the microphone when other

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governors failed to refute MoP criticism and delivered a lucid tirade against the structure of the budget system. That he would do so in front of the Deputy Prime Minister, senior KRG officials, the COM, MND-N commander, and key members of the Iraqi cabinet shows his substantive knowledge but also his sense that his position is unassailable.

¶19. (S/NF) Kashmoula,s administration is harmful to our interests in three ways.

-- His poor record of governance fuels Sunni alienation and hostility, which likely correlates with insurgent recruiting and public support;

-- His open support for the KRG distorts the provincial debate on the subject of internal boundaries - a provincial government which should reflect the totality of opinion in the province instead serves the agenda of one party; and

-- His attempt to increase his personal authority blocks attempts to foster transparency and devolve power to the districts and sub-districts.

¶10. (S/NF) All this criticism notwithstanding, Kashmoula was elected by the established political process and) as he is fond of reminding his many detractors) can only be

dismissed by the provincial council. Our continued engagement with him is not a benediction, but an acknowledgement that his is a legitimate mandate, albeit one that he secured thanks to the Sunni,s catastrophic decision to boycott the elections and the Kurdish parties, political skill in assembling a coalition. The best answer to Kashmoula) and the broader failure of governance in Ninewa -- is free, fair and inclusive elections, the sooner the better.

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